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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: DUP CHAIRMAN MIRGHANI URGES STRONGER TIES,  
FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM USG

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Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: In a January 19 meeting with CDA Fernandez, DUP Chairman Mohamed Mirghani urged direct USG financial support for Sudanese Northern opposition parties, including his party so it could compete in national elections on a level playing field with the NCP. He also requested that USG liaise with the DUP and other Northern opposition parties directly, rather than deal with them under the aegis of the SPLM. This is because the SPLM can be as inflexible and intolerant as the NCP, he said. With regard to Darfur, Mirghani told CDA that he and Salva Kiir have agreed to form a joint DUP-SPLM committee aimed at unification of Darfur's rebel movements. He also stated that he has urged officials from Qatar, Egypt and Libya to unite their disparate visions to solve the crisis. End Summary.

¶2. (C) On January 19, CDA met with Mohamed Osman Al Mirghani, elderly leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), and head of the Khatimiyya Sufi Order, at his office in Khartoum. (Note: Mirghani returned to Khartoum after a fifteen-year absence in November 2008 for the burial of his brother, former President Ahmed Al Mirghani, the last democratically-elected head of state of Sudan. Mirghani told CDA he would return to his home in Cairo within a matter of days. End Note). Mirghani characterized the DUP as the majority party in Sudan and emphasized its broad popular appeal, pointing to the thousands of mourners who turned up spontaneously to pay their respects to his late brother at the Sayed Ali Al Mirghani Mosque in Khartoum North and to the million people who welcomed him upon his return. "This happened without organization, without Pepsis or sandwiches for the people." DUP remains popular despite attempts by the NCP to stifle and divide it, he said, including his own periodic detentions at the hands of the regime and confiscation of his personal as well as party property.

¶3. (C) DUP is hopeful that free and fair elections will take place at the beginning of next year, said Mirghani, but he complained that most of the party's property has been confiscated, and it lacked the resources to compete in an election. "The party simply doesn't have any money," he remarked, claiming that if it were provided with a level playing field, DUP would "undoubtedly fare well." Money is needed to organize and mobilize the party's support base, he said, noting that a planned party convention with over 3,000 attendees has been put on hold due to a lack of funds. To that end, he requested direct USG financial support for DUP and its election campaign. "We are looking for our friends to support the DUP and the political opposition for the sake of stability in the country," he said. Mirghani emphasized that

the unity of Sudan is essential to peace, predicting that if the South secedes it will disintegrate into small tribal states. Nor would be NCP allow the South to co-exist peacefully. "If you leave the NCP in the North, you'll never have peace in the South," he said. CDA noted that the North is equally if not more unstable than South Sudan, with political pressure in Darfur, East Sudan (where the DUP is strongest) and even Nubia.

¶4. (C) Mirghani also complained to CDA that the DUP and other Northern opposition parties are often viewed by USG officials through the lens or under the aegis of the SPLM (due to their relationship in the formerly active National Democratic Alliance, which was formed based on an agreement between the late John Garang and Mirghani himself.) This is doing the DUP a great disservice, he said, because the SPLM is often as rigid and intolerant as the NCP. "Totalitarianism exists not only in the North but in the South as well," he said. Instead, he urged that the USG deal with the DUP and other Northern opposition parties directly as a way of bringing democracy to Sudan. "Deal with us directly, rather than doing everything through Juba," he said. Mirghani also expressed interest in visiting Washington for meetings with USG officials, once the incoming administration is settled in.

¶5. (C) Mirghani also told CDA about the DUP's efforts to resolve the crisis in Darfur, noting that the party carries weight because "it is the only party without blood on its hands." He stated that he has met with officials from Qatar, Egypt and Libya and requested that they unite their often competing visions for Darfur. Mirghani also noted that he and GOSS President Salva Kiir have just agreed to form a joint DUP-SPLM committee aimed at supporting the unification of Darfur's rebel movements. The formation of the committee is still in progress, he said.

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¶6. (C) Comment: Mirghani's contention that the DUP is the majority party in Sudan is simply not true, as the party has been weakened by schisms and defections, and is certainly weaker than both the ruling NCP, the SPLM, and the opposition Umma party of former Prime Minister Sadiq al Mahdi. And while Mirghani himself is revered as the spiritual leader of the Al-Khatimyya Sufi sect, he has been criticized in his role as DUP Chairman for his aloofness and autocratic leadership style. Indeed, as long as he remains outside of Sudan (Mirghani spent most of the last two years in Cairo,) it is difficult to see how he could mobilize the party to become a significant force in the 2009 elections despite its remaining base. Nonetheless, we cannot afford to ignore Northern opposition parties, both as a counter-balance to the NCP and as natural allies to the SPLM and as the best hope for peaceful, democratic change in the North whether or not the South votes for secession in 2011. End comment.  
FERNANDEZ